OUTLOOK *for the* BLIND

and THE TEACHERS FORUM

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TALKING BOOK EDUCATION

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VOL. 43 JUNE, 1949 NO. 6

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AN EXPERIMENT IN ORIENTATION

LORETTA PEASE

He was standing before the cage of the myna bird, his face alight, his big brown eyes shining—beautiful eyes. "I didn't know there was a bird like that. I've read—," he hesitated. An apathetic, listless look came into his strong, intelligent face. "I have read—", but now he can no longer read. He likes to read. He likes bicycling, too. His days have been filled with joy on a productive Tennessee Valley farm. But most of all he likes to read.

This thing had happened to Jack slowly. At first he had hardly noticed it at all. When his mother discovered it, she had taken him from doctor to doctor. Always it was the same. "Optic atrophy. No known cure." And now he can no longer read. He can't ride his bicycle on the highway. He can't do this. He can't do that.

Jack hadn't wanted to leave home. He hadn't wanted to leave his five brothers and sisters, swell kids. Nor his Mom. Nor his Dad. Why, he and his Dad had been pals—, until now. Now they had sent him away. Wanted him to go. Made him go, in fact. Well, he didn't like it. He didn't like anything about it. He wouldn't stay. He wouldn't learn anything and maybe they would send him home.

"Sinbad! Sinbad! What's your name?" The myna bird changed his tone, pleadingly. "What's your name?"

Jack was one of a group of twelve new students at the Tennessee School for the Blind. They had been students in public schools, where, either because of very poor vision they had met continuous defeats and frustrations resulting in a sense of insecurity, or their whole status in life had been suddenly changed. They had been active normal kids—playing, working, studying, when something happened that shut them in eternal darkness. For Edgar it was a dry ice explosion. For Tom it was a dynamite cap which took

Miss Loretta Pease has been in charge of orientation and counseling at the Tennessee School for the Blind during the past year.

one arm as well as his sight. There is a hook now where his left hand once was.

They have come to the school for the blind asking for a new lease on life. Each one comes, not fresh and young and unhurt, as the little beginner comes to school, but already a part of a fixed pattern. Here in the few school years remaining to him we must help him to face his handicap. We must train his remaining senses to replace, in a measure, this one he has lost. We must help him to discover and develop those talents still useful to him that he may become independent economically. We must give him interests and information to enrich his leisure hours. We must provide for him every possible opportunity to work in a group, to set up its policies and to do his part in carrying out its projects, sharing its failures as well as its successes, that he may develop, not only as an individual, but as an intelligent part of a democratic society.

Out of the tangled web of the peculiar needs of these older-new students we wove our plan for an ungraded orientation room. Here, amid pleasant surroundings and an abundance of interesting material we felt we could better guide these boys and girls in the making of their adjustments to their blindness, to the school, and to the other students. And here they would learn their braille.

This year's class ranged from ten to eighteen years in age, and from grade four through nine. Really, the only things these students had in common were that none of them could read braille and that all had come here for an education.

To learn braille as an end in itself would be dull business indeed. It is better that it be treated as a tool, the skilful use of which is to be highly valued. Since people learn readily only that in which they are interested and learn more rapidly from actual than from vicarious experiences, our immediate problem was to find out what things might interest this heterogeneous group. It had to be something near by, something simple, something that could be handled and something that would be challenging to eighteen-year-olds as well as to ten-year-olds. So we had gone to the near-by Children's Museum.

At the museum, Mr. Hassler told us that if we would build a pen he would give us a pair of guinea pigs. In the end we got the pigs, which we named Dot and Groper after the braille dots we were groping over. But that triumph involved the calculation of the cost of the materials for the pen and its construction. When we went to the lumber yard to purchase the materials, we talked to Mr. Hathcock, who showed us different kinds of wood, let us feel their texture and test their hardness. He described a recent visit to the forest of Oregon where he "felt like taking off his hat in the presence of the grand old trees." Back at school we had our first experience with a map with raised contours.

We went into the yard and examined a tree, its bark, its leaves, next year's buds, the size of its trunk and the spread of its branches. We measured the shadow of the tree. A blind boy held the tape at the trunk while a partially sighted one followed its shadow. A post and its shadow were measured. The height of the tree was calculated and stepped off. We returned to the classroom where we examined braille words: "tree", "bark", "leaves", "trunk", and so on. From time to time other trees were examined and the words grew into brailled sentences, built from these experiences. The sentences grew into stories varying with the grade level interests. At first I wrote them. Then they wrote them for each other. We illustrated these stories with tree leaves glued down with rubber cement. Each student fastened his stories together to make his first braille book.

By the end of the first month we were deep in the history and geography of Nashville. We visited every point of historic interest within walking distance. We visited the

cemetery where the earliest settlers lay at rest. We read the dates on the tombstones. We visited Fort Nashborough. We climbed up Capitol Hill and imagined it when it was Cedar Knob. At the end of two months every child was reading a textbook on his own grade level. The stories he was reading in these books were the ones which described pioneer life. These stories helped explain the early life in Nashville. Every actual experience became a braille experience—an experience in reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic, as well as one in history.

Acquaintance with early life in Nashville led to an investigation of early life in Tennessee. This involved the geography of Tennessee, which in turn interested us in the geology of the state. When we were examining the Cumberland flood plain to determine why the early railroads were built along it, we discovered limestone underlying our school grounds. Why was it there? How old was it? Were limestone beds underlying all of Tennessee? While investigating the types of river traffic still carried on on the Cumberland River, we discovered a gravel pile. We examined it. What kinds of rocks did it contain? We got permission to carry off specimens. We gave these pebbles the hammer test, the scratch test, and the hydrochloric test. Were any of these rocks of economic value in Tennessee, other than gravel? Did anything else of commercial value come from under the soil of this state? We had to read to find out the things we wanted to know. We had to use geography books and science books.

In the gravel pile we also found fossils. In the dry stream beds at the school for the blind camp site we found many more. Crinoid stems are so numerous there that a few minutes groping in the dry runs rewards the clumsiest touch. We went home and read *Shovel-tusk*.

Somehow, this journey back in time, led to an interest in space. That took us out of the world we could feel. With thumb tacks for stars I made the shapes of constellations. We used clay moons to give a concept of the phases. With homemade gadgets we illustrated revolution and rotation. We visited the Vanderbilt Observatory. The blind saw the telescope. Those with some sight saw the moon and told the others what they saw.

When the legislature was in session the older students found out about the government of their state, visited both houses and talked to the governor. The little ones were busy building a half-face cabin with sticks and clay, and furnishing it, pioneer style.

Weather was often a part of our conversation. Air, sunshine, rain, heat and cold, the thunder, the wind, can be felt and smelled and heard. Yet knowledge about them was limited to superstitions about them. So we found out about air pressure by fastening a balloon to a flask where we had created a partial vacuum. We could feel the balloon sink into the bottle. We formed a partial vacuum in an oil can and saw its sides cave in. We made a kite and glider and flew them. We made a parachute and dropped a doll from a third story window. We read a brailled thermometer and a brailled barometer. We made weather predictions. We explained the deserts and tundras of the world.

By that time we were as interested in aeronautics as in weather. The little ones read stories of the development of aircraft and the early pilots. The older ones read about the parts of a plane, what makes it fly, what instruments are used, the relation of weather to flying. They read of nose dives, blackouts, and the "Flying Carpet." We visited Berry Field and were taken into a liner, just landed from Los Angeles. We sat in the seats, fastened the belts, and dreamed we were flying. We listened to the radio while the pilot reported his position. We investigated the instrument board and the tiny kitchen. At the weather bureau we saw the rain gauge, the weather balloons and their

instruments. We heard at firsthand about weather and aviation.

This is the merest outline of our activities. The over-all picture is one of fun, of broadening interests and learnings. We learned to read what we needed to read, to write what we needed to write and to spell what we needed to spell. We worked the problems we needed to solve. Those who have sight learned how to best use that sight. The blind learned to value their other faculties.

And through it all we learned to plan together and to live together. We learned to respect one another and to share with each other. And out of this sharing grew a deep feeling of belonging. Of belonging to the school, to the state and to society, a sense of a place in the great scheme of things.

As the blind child's knowledge of the great variety of things with which he is surrounded increases, as the world in which he lives takes on meaning, he is challenged to see through the tips of his fingers the beauty of quality and texture and to hear with the joy of recognition the hum of an insect or the song of a bird. He consciously breathes in the freshness of the morning, the dampness of the fog, the perfume of the newly opened flower.

With this awakening comes a faith in himself, in his fellowmen, and in his God. Through his awareness of the wind sighing in the trees, of the water running over the stones, the hush of evening, coupled with a knowledge of their causes and results, comes healing. Only through understanding born of interests can that cold voice within the newly-blind which cries out, "Why am I blind, when all these others can see?" be stilled. Only through deep interests born of experience can his confusions and frustrations give way to confidence.

MARBURG INSTITUTE FOR BLIND STUDENTS

ERNEST C. HASSOLD

THIS MORNING, Professor Dr. Carl Strehl showed me his Institute for Blind Students. He is himself blind and his life's work has been to demonstrate that through a proper education the blind can lead the blind to a happy and useful life.

Prof. Strehl was born in Berlin some sixty years ago. He was in New York City when he became blind at the age of twenty—a young seaman bent on becoming a ship's captain. After he had lost his sight he came to Marburg, a quiet inland town, to study at the university. He has since studied economics and philology and received an honorary degree in medicine. All of his studies proved extremely useful once he found his life's work, at the age of thirty. In 1916 he founded the Marburg Institute for the Blind and during the past thirty-two years he has developed it into an institution of international significance and renown.

The basic idea of this institute is to educate the blind to help themselves by scientific training and vocational guidance. From small beginnings the Institute developed a group of accredited institutions, which provide several educational programs for pupils who have had six years of elementary schooling; a guidance service for 2,000 blind all over Germany based on an extensive archive of

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materials pertinent to the education of the blind; a library in braille of 30,000 volumes; a publishing house, printing shop and bindery, which from 1920-1948 has produced 1,345 separate publications and issues a sort of Reader's Digest for the blind, the periodical *Marburger Umschau;* and a factory for materials and machines for the use of the blind, from slates and notebooks to various kinds of typewriters and a stereotyper. It has organized an auxiliary Association of Blind Intellectual Workers, which in 1948 (its thirty-third year) had 727 members, 174 of them war-blinded.

This complex institution is housed in three different parts of Marburg. On the Liebigstrasse, in the heart of the little town of 42,000, a large old three-storied brick house with a veranda overlooking an extensive lawn houses the office, the study home for university students and the archive. I met Prof. Strehl in his office and was not aware of his blindness until he began reading figures to me from a report in braille. After an orientation in his office, we went through the house, visited the modern library building in the adjacent lot and then rode across the town past the Elizabeth church up a sloping hillside to the large and beautiful estate "Am Schlag", which houses the rest of the institution except for another dormitory which I did not have time to visit.

In his office, Prof. Strehl told me briefly about his institute, his association with the American Foundation for Overseas Blind, and his contacts with Louisville and its school for the blind. He was a delegate from Germany in 1931 to the World Conference on work for the Blind held April 13-30 in New York, where fifty-six nations were represented. This New York conference was the culmination of a series of international congresses held through the nineteen-twenties and it looked as if blind welfare would soon be organized on a world-wide basis. Then came in Germany the years 1933-39 with their totalitarian claim, to which, he said, the care of the blind had to some extent to submit for good or ill; and 1939-45 the great second world war with its tragic results. In connection with the conference in New York in 1931, Prof. Strehl took advantage of the opportunity to visit some of the American institutions.

Shortly after the war, Prof. Strehl reported to the American Foundation for Overseas Blind on the catastrophical situation of the blind in post-war Germany. Mr. Raverat of Paris, the European director, met Prof. Strehl in Zurich in 1947, and Dr. Robert Irwin of New York and Mr. Raverat met him in Stuttgart in 1948. These meetings resulted in a relief program for the destitute blind in Germany, which is to provide for both private persons and institutions, books, paper, records, plates, slates and printing machines; as well as mattresses, soap and chess games. On our tour of inspection I saw a bed made from the 3,000 meters of mattress ticking sent over; it was far better than any bed I had seen in any of the student homes belonging to the university.

The latest development was a meeting in Berlin on March 21 with the welfare officer of OMGUS and German organizations and institutions, from which Prof. Strehl had just returned. This meeting decided to set up at once a relief program for the blind in Berlin, for which the American Foundation for Overseas Blind will give clothes, shoes and laundry to the value of $5,000.

Prof. Strehl supplied me with several articles and reports and then took me on a tour of the buildings. He introduced me to every person we met, seemed to see and know them all, student or employee, blind or seeing. He first showed me a handbook on the care of the blind, which he had edited in 1927 and 1931. It was published in German in two volumes—one for Germany, the other for America and other countries. The section on education of the blind in the United States was written by Harry Best of Lexington. Prof.

Strehl said that the director of the school for the blind in New York, Dr. Merle Frampton, at one time had travelled all over Europe with this book as his guide, and is now urging Prof. Strehl to bring the book up to date and publish it in English.

The first person we met was Prof. Strehl's secretary, Dr. Rogler, a young woman who had come to my office two days before to inquire about an entry permit to England. From August 3 to 13 an International Conference of Workers for the Blind is to be held at Oxford under the joint sponsorship of the National Institute for the Blind in London and the American Foundation for Overseas Blind in New York. This is to be attended by delegates from more than twenty countries, and Prof. Strehl is to be one of the delegates from Germany.

In the course of one hour of inspection we met about thirty persons, most of them blind. And all but one of them seemed happy and contented with their work or study. Since I had always been told that the blind are exceptionally touchy and easily hurt, this seemed gratifying. It was in keeping with the state of the rooms and buildings we visited, where the living and working conditions of students and employees were altogether pleasant and agreeable. The one exception was a student who was looking for books in braille by modern writers—particularly Herman Hesse and A. E. Housman and found the English books only in shorthand, which he cannot read. Prof. Strehl told him to take a week off and learn braille shorthand—he himself had learnt to read German, French and English shortscript in eight days. The student kept on complaining. Later on, when we came to the publishing house, Prof. Strehl told the manager they must print more works by modern writers, such as Hesse and Housman.

As we went through the student home we saw blind university students with their readers preparing for examinations. Several were students of law; one girl was writing a dissertation on Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. We looked in at the archive which seeks to keep abreast of all new developments in the field of education for the blind and furnishes the basis for both the eclectic "Umschau" published here and the very extensive service in vocational guidance for blind intellectual workers all over Germany. The library next door contains 30,000 volumes in braille in all fields of university study of interest to the blind. It seemed particularly strong in cultural history, literature and music. But it lacks altogether wax records and "talking books". As we were leaving the grounds, Prof. Strehl, tapping the broken pavement with his cane, remarked that it was fortunate for them that the bomb that had destroyed the house across the street had only shivered the windows of the Institute, for had it hit them it would have destroyed some forty persons and some materials it would be hard to replace.

As we first rode and then walked up the hillside on the other side of the town, it seemed beautiful to me in the light and warmth of a spring day, but to the eyes of Prof. Strehl it was studded with deficiencies in the education of the blind. It lacked especially a swimming pool and equipment for physical education, and he emphasized the importance of physical fitness for the psychic condition of the blind. We entered the dormitory building which is large, light and airy. It has a marvellous glass porch, where a blind boy, who had just been graduated from the business school and was to leave school the next day, was sunning himself. Prof. Strehl knew all about him and his record—somehow he seems to see and recognize them all.

As we entered the manufactory of machines for the blind, I thought of Diderot and Franklin and how this practical side of a cultural project would have pleased them. Here blind and seeing employees join in producing a large variety of machines and materials used in the education of the blind, including play-

ing cards and chess sets. About 1,200 machines are to be made here annually.

Upstairs in the same building are the publishing house, the printing shop, and bindery. They have printed here nearly 1,400 books. One of them is a history of the United States on zinc plates. There is a press that prints up to 800 plates an hour, and need for another. The difficulty now is that the firm that makes the presses is in Dresden in the Russian zone, so they will have to try to get one from elsewhere in Europe or the United States. They have received 5,000 kilograms of paper from the American Foundation for Overseas Blind and this has enabled them to produce works 30% more cheaply. They print many books in small editions of between fifteen and one hundred copies; the average runs between twenty-five and fifty. The books in braille are voluminous. A German translation of Eisenhower's book, "From Invasion to Victory", which was just being proof-read will fill five volumes in German braille and cost 1,000 DM to copy in shorthand. One of the most interesting features of this printing house is the production of maps. They are working on a relief map of the United States. Great care is taken by the cartographer to make each map scientifically accurate, and yet simplified enough not to confuse the blind reader. The maps I saw of the vicinity of Marburg, of Switzerland, of Great Britain and of the United States provided a sensate experience, which suggested that if such maps were used in all schools, they would immensely enhance the interest in geography.

Prof. Strehl wants to issue an illustrated prospectus of the visual aids produced here, but his camera had to be delivered in the Rathaus to the occupation authorities along with other instruments of war, and so far he has not been able to buy a new one or to beg or borrow one from Leitz.

A blind girl was reading proof on Shaw's *Saint Joan*. Prof. Strehl told the manager that a student had complained about their lack of some modern books. He was told that Hesse's *Glasperlenspiel* was in process, but they would print other works by him. He showed me the alphabet in different languages—German, English, Esperanto, French, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Russian, Spanish—and told me about the Bible in Greek and Hebrew which they are printing volume by volume.

Their catalogue of publications covers sixty-eight pages, forty-eight of which are devoted to books in various languages and from various literatures, ancient and modern. They have printed nine operas and fourteen other works on music, thirteen on chess, nine on geography; and have made about twenty relief maps which cost from one dollar to two and a half. They have just received a request from Green Isle, Minnesota, to print the *Lutherische Bote* of the Missouri Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

When I left Prof. Strehl, I felt that I had spent one of the best times of my stay in Germany so far. When I found time to read the four pamphlets and manuscripts he had given me, my firsthand impressions of the work of the Institute for Blind Students were broadened and deepened. I was particularly interested to learn a bit about the history of the education of the blind and about the present status of the subject.

The traditional attitude towards the blind may roughly be summed up in the ironic question: Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch? This is most poignantly expressed in the realistic painting by Breughel on this subject. And it has not yet lost a symbolical relevancy to our life today. But in the eighteenth century a change in outlook set in. Diderot's *Essay on the Blind for Those Who See* in 1749 both symbolized and stimulated the growth of a new conception, according to which the blind were no longer regarded as either rapt seers like old Teiresias, or as unfortunate creatures, bereft of reason along with their vision, but as human beings whose capacities had to be

scientifically studied and humanly developed. Two countrymen of Diderot took up the impulse which he had given and which the French Revolution had reinforced: Valentin Haüy, a philanthropist who founded the first school and workshop for the blind in Paris, France, and Louis Braille, who developed the six-point script, which has gradually come to prevail in the rest of the world, and since 1932 in the United States also.

When Haüy's institute for the blind was closed by Napoleon, the result was the spread of his idea. Haüy was invited to Russia, and on the way stopped in Berlin where he had an opportunity to present his case to the king and queen of Prussia. An institution on his principles was established in Berlin in 1806; a similar one, influenced by his ideas, had been established in Vienna in 1804. The War of Liberation (1813-14) provided inmates for three new institutions for the blind in eastern Germany. Later in the nineteenth century the movement to educate the blind was supported by social legislation and by international congresses, which began in 1873 (again after a war) and culminated in 1931 in the World Congress in New York. After the first World War, the new aspect of the development was vocational guidance and training, undertaken by the new institutes, such as the one in Marburg.

By 1933, 90% of all the blind in Germany who were capable of working were either employed or so provided for that they were not indigent. The depression of 1929-32 caused many hardships and dismissals, but welfare organizations and governmental agencies cooperated in reducing these to the minimum.

The situation in 1945 Prof. Strehl describes as catastrophical. The three greatest institutions in Koenigsberg, Breslau and Stettin in the east were lost. The rest of the institutes in the East Zone were partially destroyed, or taken over by the occupation authorities. Nor was the picture far different in the West Zone. Of the institutions there, 50% were totally destroyed, 25% damaged severely by bombs or other action. Few were left of the teaching staffs. Blind children had to stay at home and their parents had found some sort of asylum in villages. A stream of homeless ones poured in from the east: the personnel of entire hospitals, workshops, homes, came across the Upper-Neisse or Elbe, with nothing but what they could carry. Many of these were blind. Reduced in size by the Potsdam agreement, Germany still has 70 million people, and the number of blind was increased through the war by about 8,000-9,000. The total is about 42,000, of whom 29,000 are in the West Zone, to be cared for by institutions, and with materials that have been severely damaged where they have not been totally destroyed. The Institute at Marburg has been exceptionally fortunate both in being spared from destruction and in receiving support from the American Foundation for Overseas Blind and from Bizonia. But in view of the general situation, its functions and responsibilities have been vastly increased.

In conclusion, I must testify to a strong impression that Prof. Strehl is one of those persons who did not waste his time between the two wars. And I am glad that, living in Marburg, I have not missed one of its most beneficent contributions to human welfare and to that other Germany which deserves to be better known in the world at large.

An informal conference of workers for the blind was held in Nagpur, India on January 31 and February 1, 1949, under the auspices of the National Christian Council of India, Burma and Pakistan. Representatives of the various Christian institutions for the blind in India were present at this gathering. The Government of India has finally accepted Uniform Indian Braille as the standard braille for Indian languages and it was decided at the conference that in future all Christian literature for the use of the Indian blind should be embossed in Uniform Indian Braille.

BRAILLE REASSESSED

Due for Elevation from Code to Script
Turning Point in Asia and Africa

SIR CLUTHA MACKENZIE

Part I

I suppose that, even though we term them "scripts", the written characters of all languages are in reality codes. One imagines that in the best circles of the written word, scripts consider themselves a cut—indeed, several cuts—above mere codes. Braille has usually been dubbed "code", but, discovering myself writing of it one day as a script, I turned to study it in that light. It is a *parvenu,* of course, invented only 120 years ago, with no origin shrouded in the mists of antiquity, bearing none of the artistic sanctity of Chinese ideographs nor any of the illustrious associations Sanskrit, Persian, Greek and Roman can claim with the glories of classical literature and ancient history. Yet braille has its own special claim to greatness. It is quite the simplest script man has ever designed; it is the most versatile in creation. Not only can it fully express every written language but equally readily it is the humble vehicle of music, shorthand and numerals. Its birth was romantic, invented as it was by a blind man to solve a problem which had long perplexed those who wanted to light the road to the education and culture of the blind. It has done its task well, and has surely earned promotion to the rank of script.

This is not just a matter of sentiment but one of practical significance. You can change a code at will and often do. Many of the older generation will recall that because we of the English-speaking countries treated braille too much as a code and not enough as a script, we got into deep water. Two or three groups thought they could improve on Braille's codification so we had many unhappy wasteful years of rival English brailles. Had braille had the status of a script from the first, this tragedy might never have happened. Roman had that status, which seems to have made it unthinkable that its characters should be juggled about or laid over on their sides the better to express the European tongues. But this was what was done with braille just because it was only a code. It is fair to add that the motives were good—to achieve a better symmetry in the setout of the characters, calculated to ease the task of the reader or help the beginner to memorise the system, though at best these were ephemeral aids.

The Spread of Braille

As a script, too, fewer liberties might have been taken in the process of "braillising" other world scripts. For the most part European and classical languages were transliterated letter for letter from the original French braille. Thus about the same degree of uniformity links the braille scripts of Europe as

Sir Clutha, speaking after ten years of association with blind welfare in the area between North Africa and China, here outlines the urgent need for establishing guiding principles in the evolution of braille as a world script. For the reason that important movements for single brailles for national languages are at present on foot, he emphasizes that we stand at a critical point in braille history.

links the Roman. When, however, in the absence of a prescribed standard, recognized principles or central authority, braille was carried to non-European languages as a code and not as a script, serious liberties were naturally taken. The bearers of braille to distant Asian and African outposts were chiefly British, American and German missionaries. Founding the first schools for little blind children, they had to improvise a braille for the vernacular, a comparatively easy task when, without regard to the brailles of other languages, only the local script was being codified.

Methods of Adaptation

The brailles of these pioneer workers followed one or other of three methods:

Method 1, by imposing the original braille seven-line sequence on top of the normal sequence of the alphabet concerned;

Method 2, by planning a new symmetry to fit the local language with a view to making it easier for the children to learn the signs;

Method 3, by allotting the original braille signs to the new language on the rough-and-ready principle of "same-sound/same-sign" or "same-letter/same-sign" as far as this was possible and giving more or less arbitrary signs for such extra sounds as there might be.

Luckily, Method 1 was resorted to by only a few workers who apparently believed that great virtue lay in the original braille order. It was a simple but harsh and arbitrary procedure which had the effect of cutting off the local braille from all outside association. On the supposition that only the local blind would use it and that they themselves had no need of a second language, Method 2 would be excellent and sympathetic, but otherwise isolationist. Fortunately, Method 3 was the one chiefly followed; and under the haphazard circumstances of the time, this preserved a rough-and-ready phonetic uniformity between Europe, Asia and Africa so far as their alphabets shared sounds or letters in common. Where there were no sounds in common, the planner selected arbitrary signs.

Thus we have a situation in which braille has acquired the broad status of a world script, leaving it only here and there as a local code. In fact, almost the whole world is embraced by International Braille—the European languages (including the classical) covering the continents of Europe, North America, South America and Australasia as well as the European-speaking elements of Asia and Africa; and we may add to these the brailles for the following non-European languages: Turkish, Hebrew, Armenian, Persian, Urdu, Hindi, Gujrati, Maratti, Kanarese, Tamil, Malayalam, Burmese, Malay, Chinese Mandarin, Cantonese, Hausa, Dinka, Swahili, Luganda, Chinyango, Nyanja, Zulu and Polynesian. There may be others of which I am not aware.

True, the phonetic relationship is often defective and erratic and far from what was possible had the disciples of braille been in a position to work on set principles from the first. Their efforts, however, constitute a valiant and inevitable stage; and it remains for us, rendered knowledgable by a century of experience, to contribute all we can to better braille's future evolution.

The Situation in Asia and Africa

At the moment, quite 99.9% of braille printing and publication is done in Europe and America, in International Braille. On the other hand, the blind of Asia and Africa enormously outnumber those of Europe and America. When I was given the task of reporting on blindness for the governments of India and China my co-workers and I found that the blind of each country numbered at least two millions, and certainly no less than another million dwell in the rest of eastern and southern Asia and the Middle East. Only about three thousand in India and the same number in China have as yet come

under the influence of modern blind welfare. A recent letter from Persia tells me that only thirty of her blind people know Persian braille. Nowhere throughout this great area has substantial braille printing been undertaken, and of course, until it begins, blind education will be heavily handicapped. The delay is due in no small measure to the crop of contradictory brailles sown by pioneer workers—half a dozen in China, eight in India and four in Arabic-speaking countries. Movements have been on foot for some time to bring about a single braille script for each of these three areas, but the lack of guiding principles in the world use of braille is still hampering rapid and rational solutions.

Complexities

Their problems are of course incomparably more complex than ours when we reduced our rival English codes to a single standard script. We were dealing with but one language, English, and but one script, Roman. The linguistic areas of Asia overlap inextricably, nor do they coincide with political boundaries. Scripts like Chinese may involve 40,000 ideographs, or like Tamil thirty-two characters. They may be tonal, syllabic or alphabetic, or, another little trifle, they may be read from right to left or from top to bottom. Of the existing Chinese brailles, Ku Shou Tung delights in 408 braille signs, while Wu Fang Yung has forty-four, Ke Hua Sin Mu Ke Ming sixty-three and Sin Mu Ke Ming fifty-four.

India's Many Languages

The old Indian sub-continent possessed eight brailles; Shireff for Hindi, Urdu and Gurmukhi; Nilkanthrai for Hindi, Mahratti and Gujrati; Kanarese and Mysore; Palamcottah for Tamil and Malayalam; Oriental for Telugu, Gujrati and others; Shah for Bengali and Advani for Sindhi. Method 1 or 2 was used in forming Oriental, Shah and Advani brailles; Method 3 in the remainder.

Unpopularity of Symmetrical Brailles

It is interesting to note that Oriental braille (Method 2) was carefully and scientifically planned by two educationists, Messrs. Knowles and Garthwaite, in 1902, as "one alphabet for the blind for all Oriental languages." That it was not so adopted, excellent as it was, was probably due to the fact that it broke away from the phonetic association with the European braille which most other Indian adaptations retained. Again, in 1942, four sighted gentlemen plotted a single code called "Uniform Indian Braille" for thirteen Indian and Persi-Arabic languages. Chiefly using Method 1 they provided for phonetic unity within India itself but once more failed to retain the old phonetic association with European braille. For this reason the Indian blind seemed unprepared to accept it and have expressed their views in a series of resolutions typical of which is the following, passed at an influential conference in Bombay, in June 1948—"This Conference, therefore, urges the government to appoint a Committee of the Blind, as, after all, the blind are most directly and deeply affected by the question, to be assisted by sighted linguists and expert phoneticians to frame and adapt a Uniform Indian Braille Code based on the similarity of sounds of the signs in the International Braille Code, as that will best facilitate the education of the blind and keep them in touch with the peoples and literatures of the world."

The Government of India, after considering the views of the various schools of thought, has taken a statesmanlike attitude and has said, "If a satisfactory world braille script is devised by international agreement in the same way that English Braille was standardized in 1932 by agreement between the English-speaking countries of the world, we shall not hesitate to fall in line with the rest of the world." In so saying, the Indian Government has made a substantial contribu-

tion towards the solution of the most complex problem braille has yet faced.

Language Areas Not Confined by Political Boundaries

We English-speaking people are notoriously lazy about learning other languages, so it is not altogether easy for us to appreciate the extent of bilingualism and trilingualism in the East. India, for example, is as prolific in languages as the whole continent of Europe and far more prolific in scripts. While some Indian languages stray little beyond districts or tribal areas, others overlap a good deal and a few are almost general. An educated Indian is usually fluent in two or three Indian tongues and English as well. This applies also to the blind Indian. Apart from books of the Bible virtually nothing has been printed in vernacular brailles, and consequently he has become accustomed to looking to the generous supply of braille books and magazines, British and American, for his literary enjoyment. Gratifyingly enough, the government has plans well advanced for braille publication on a big scale; all the same, the Indian blind expect to draw upon English braille for a long time to come. This reliance upon English braille for reading material is in fact general throughout the area under discussion--a situation which has strengthened the desire of its blind for a phonetic world braille. The Indian blind man realises, too, that while English braille means a great deal to him today, ready access to Persian, Arabic, Russian or Chinese may mean just as much or even more to him tomorrow.

The advantage to the blind reader of several languages is, of course, that the bulk of the braille characters carry the same sound or nearly the same sound in whatever language he turns to. A further consideration is that large Indian communities have settled in Africa, the East Indies, Fiji, Burma and Malaya, while commerce and study take many Indians to Europe and America, where any measure which contributes to linguistic freedom must be of advantage.

Malaya Meets The Situation

Malaya, in fact, supplies a striking illustration of how this braille puzzle can be solved. Probably no other country in the world employs four such violently diverse languages and scripts: Malay, the script of which is Arabic; Tamil, a Dravidian language of southern India; Chinese (Mandarin) and English. A government committee studied a Standard International Braille chart worked out in India by a committee of British and Indian blind, covering fourteen languages. With minor modifications the government accepted the Tamil, Arabic and English as set out on this chart and adapted Chinese (Mandarin) to fit in with them on the same-sound/same-sign principle. With Malaya's various communities using one another's languages, with the possibility even of the languages becoming merged to form a new one, and for the immediate task of teaching mixed classes in the local blind school, the advantages of a single phonetic braille are obvious. In fact, the Malayan situation is a microcosm, certainly a large one, of the braille situation throughout the whole area from west Africa to the Pacific.

Persian as an Example

Last year I was asked by a blind Persian and a Persian expert in linguistics to discuss the application of this principle to the Persian language. An earlier missionary adaptation under Method 3 had already been made. They strongly approved this phonetic principle and together we worked out a more ample form, associating Persian braille both with Western braille and with that adopted by Malaya. They regarded many Standard English Braille symbols as adequately representing a considerable range of Persian characters, as, for example: B,D,F,G,H,J,K,L,M,N,P,R,S, T,V,Y, and Z. Certain of our standard contractions, representing two Roman letters,

stand for sounds which are expressed by a single Persian character, example Ch and Sh. An additional Persian J carries the sound of the French J. C, W and X have no equivalents in Persian. Our vowels are used, but call for some modification. Though not differentiated in everyday speech, slight variants giving two extra S and three extra Z sounds need to be provided for in the alphabet.

With his braille shaped in this form, a Persian learning English or vice versa is in a similar situation to that of a sighted English speaker learning a Continental language. As a blind man, the Persian is working in a common script and has only to make the average range of adjustments in pronunciation and usage experienced by all who learn foreign tongues; whereas a sighted Persian learning English has to work in a strange script. For the student learning a second language, it will be necessary, as is already done in the case of seeing students, for him to have a braille key giving the exact values of the braille symbols in the new language.

Arabic Brailles

Persi-Arabic languages are used over a wide range of territory from the Pillars of Hercules to the Western Pacific and merge with many Indian languages. Several brailles have been designed for Arabic and it is to be hoped that, when a final single form is drawn up, it too will be in line with world braille script. The present Egyptian adaptation follows Method 1, that is, the original braille sequence has been imposed upon the Arabic alphabetical sequence, and, what is more arbitrary, the braille is read from right to left and the signs themselves read in what we call "looking-glass fashion." The first sign, therefore, is dot 4; the second, dots 4-5 and so on. Islam is conservative in traditional matters, but, during my years in the Middle East and India, I have always found the Moslem peoples kindly and helpful in their attitude towards their blind.

Towards a Single Braille

As already stated, China, India and the Arabic countries are planning single brailles. This is very much to the good, but it must be clear to all that, infinitely better than a single separate braille for each of these areas, would be one and only one braille, for all three. Even greater still would be the merging of this single braille with world braille. In essence this amounts to achieving three evolutionary steps in one and brings us logically to braille's final development.

A Turning Point

The present moment, therefore, when Asian and African pioneer brailles are still malleable and before libraries have been established, is a critical point in braille history. Realising as we do, the unhappy consequences of the haphazard past, we have the choice of establishing principles, of promoting braille permanently to the rank of an international script, or of leaving its dots still to be turned this way or that at the whim of the local planner.

If we accept the former, the sun would set on the day when braille was rough-handled as a lowly code, and will rise on the glorious morrow with braille recognized fully as a world script, ready to yield to the blind the full advantage of their unique position as the sole possessors of such a script. There are difficulties, of course, but they are capable of solution and we shall talk these over in the next article.

BOWLING TOURNAMENT

The second national tournament for blind bowlers will be held on July 9 and 10, under the sponsorship of the Industrial Home for the Blind. It is hoped that as many as a hundred teams may enter the competition.

Address inquiries to: Arthur E. Copeland, Director of Recreation, Industrial Home for the Blind, 520 Gates Avenue, Brooklyn 16, New York.

WHAT DO WE TEACH?

SOME ASPECTS OF THE HOME TEACHER'S WORK

MARY MELVIN

THIS PAPER is not presented with the idea that the possibilities here hinted at have been fully explored and no attempt has been made to classify all helpful procedures. Not every student will derive equally satisfactory results from the approach here outlined.

The home teacher of the adult blind teaches adjustment. Yes, provided that we do not mean by "adjustment" a state of blessedness once achieved by certain rigid tests and thereafter held at a fixed point. A teacher must conceive of personal adjustment as ever-changing and shifting minutiae of everyday life. Spiritually, we all know that we can fall from a state of grace, and psychologically and socially we can all depart from the most satisfactory adjustment. To assume the rigid attitude that this blind student is very well adjusted, and the other is not, according to some narrow standards of living which the teacher has set up, is to lay ourselves open to the criticism included in the satire, "His status is quo."

We cannot teach our adult blind students one way to do certain things which make life easier and say that this way is right, and another way wrong. A home teacher suggested to Mrs. H. that she might like to learn to dial her phone as that would give her a certain degree of independence; but Mrs. H. had not thought of doing that before and so she declined the lesson. On the second visit from the teacher, however, Mrs. H. suggested that she would like to learn to dial the phone. So she had a lesson in dialing, which was, incidentally, also a lesson in general finger manipulation without the use of sight. At the time of the third visit, Mrs. H. announced that she had dialed the phone and called up several old friends with whom she had not communicated since losing her sight. "But," she added, "I did not do it the way you showed me. I did it my own way." Excellent! Excellent! Mrs. H. is an adult, and must be treated as such. There are doubtless several satisfactory ways of dialing a phone without looking at it. The point is that Mrs. H. was encouraged to try it, was given a little basic finger training, and received a demonstration of the fact that she could do certain things without sight.

Mr. B., aged 23, and blinded four months previously, wanted a few suggestions about table manners. It must be remembered that Mr. B. already had a set of fairly good table manners established. Mr. B. and the teacher did not thereupon inaugurate a curriculum of banquets, breakfasts and luncheons. Such a procedure would be hard on the figures of the pocketbook and of the person. No, Mr. B. was encouraged to teach himself by several tests the difference in feel under the fork between potatoes and meat, potatoes and some softer vegetable. Sliced beets under the fork have a quite different texture from that of broccoli. Mr. B. might even have it pointed out to him that a salt cellar is usually heavier than a pepper castor of the same make. But, be careful! The salt cellar may be empty, and

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the pepper full. There are no cut-and-dried rules. We point out to our students how best to utilize "the total sensory potential", to quote Dr. Berthold Lowenfeld. We do not prescribe definite rules. We encourage them to make their own discoveries, to compare and judge. We point out and illustrate the general rule, and leave the student to make his own adaptations as far as possible.

Hand-training, in its fullest implications, is so important to a blind person that this one aspect of the home teacher's work is frequently fundamental to the newly-blinded student's better and progressive adjustment —to develop to the full the sensitivity of the fingertips, the muscle control and the kinesthetic sense. Typing is thus a drill in muscle patterns, and the intelligent blind adult enjoys having this pointed out to him. Mr. F., aged 58, was a highly intelligent man whose mental and social ability was above average but whose motor ability appeared unequal to his other capacities. His typing was fumbling and uncertain. The teacher worked with him, with his hearty cooperation, toward building exact, precise finger movements, explaining that this method of going directly after a given objective was one way to make for sureness of movement, for rhythm, and, therefore, for pleasure in many other activities besides typing. Having worked with this point of view in mind for about three months, Mr. F. vastly improved his rhythm and his sureness of touch in typing, thereby improving his speed and accuracy and likewise deriving greater pleasure from the mere act of typing. It was then that he explained to the teacher that he had had a slight stroke a few years earlier from which he had entirely recovered so far as the grosser movements and the larger muscles were concerned. A year later, when the teacher again met Mr. F., after his lessons had been discontinued, his precision of movement in the ordinary affairs of his daily life was noticeable and he himself remarked upon it and attributed it largely to his having given attention to muscle patterns and to what he called his kinesthetic sense.

Mr. M., a very discouraged newly-blinded man of sixty-three, an accountant by profession, was first induced to learn typing. Later he expressed a wish to renew his favorite avocation of years past, that of playing the piano. He had not touched the piano for several years and thought that for him to play without sight was an effort in the stratosphere of impossibility. The teacher played simple things for him, then encouraged him to try simple chords and soon he was again playing what he had formerly played in his youth. But all this playing was preceded by hand-training, the use of the hands to visualize what he was doing, the coordination of his hands without the guidance of the eyes. He cultivated his positional sense and later used this basic skill in other activities. This kind of hand-training can be very well given through typing. A little hint of elementary physiology and psychology thrown in on the side can be mulled over and utilized by the thoughtful student when he is experimenting by himself.

The playing of brailled dominoes can be very useful to home teachers, to afford pleasure, to foster better acquaintance with a new student and his family, and, incidentally, to enable him to observe the use of the hands. An occasional suggestion as to the enjoyment the teacher derived from art objects will cause wonder and later some quiet thinking on the part of the student. An ornamental pin with a simple design in relief or a carefully selected figurine taken from the teacher's bag and slipped into the hands of the student can not only afford pleasure at the moment, but may lead to his going on exploratory expeditions in search of beauty through the tactual sense. Mr. G., aged 60, had been a lumberjack in the Canadian woods. He had blinded himself while attempting suicide and he was now very melancholy. He enjoyed talking French with

the teacher. One day the teacher slipped into his hand a piece of carved wood saying, "Monsieur, voici un objet d'art."* Spontaneously, he laughed aloud and said, "O! Mademoiselle, c'est un petit cerf."** From then on he felt more comfortable using his hands to discover means of living more successfully. We must be cautious, however, not to force this appreciation of beauty through the sense of touch, and often not to approach it directly at all. A casual, natural, but always genuine expression of enjoyment of beauty through the fingers on the part of the teacher is helpful. But the blind student must not be led to suppose that the teacher is suggesting that the pleasure to be thus derived is identical with the pleasure derived through sight. Also, we must be cautious not to produce nostalgia, disappointment, amounting at times in the newly-blinded to revulsion against examining objects with the hands. There is a natural diffidence in the newly-blinded against letting a person with sight witness his investigating slowly and awkwardly some object that he formerly glanced at and took in with no effort, with no conscious movement. As Mr. C. once put it when asked if he enjoyed a piece of sculpture, "I would rather depend on my imagination." However, it was noticed that when others in the group were handling some new gadget, he clamored to have his chance to examine it. Also, when a sight-seeing tour to the antique furniture display at the art gallery was suggested, he did not want to be left out. So, diffidence about handling objects can be overcome and the habit of using touch readily and freely can be cultivated.

What then? Do we insist that all blind adults submit to a fixed curriculum of hand training? Obviously not. We work to develop, or to show our student how to develop his full "total sensory potential." But if his total sensory potential is extremely restricted, we do not spend endless hours trying to have him do those things which would probably end in frustration for him. Mrs. G., aged 66, was a diabetic and could not read the braille characters with any degree of satisfaction. Also, she was arthritic and her fingers were stiff and bent. She could not type with enough facility to give her a feeling of success. However, she learned both braille and typing mentally, so to speak, but typing and reading braille are dependent upon physical functioning. Nevertheless, Mrs. G. needed some stimulation and encouragement suitable to her condition. She was a good and quick student, and enjoyed learning. She had a good ear for rhyme, a feeling for rhythm and a spirit sensitive to beauty. These were her endowments to be used for her enrichment by the teacher and herself. A poem was read to her one day from a braille book and she expressed a desire to write poetry. It developed that her idea of poetry was very limited, and that she thought of poetry as little more than doggerel, or at best, sentimental repetition of certain clichés. The study of modern poetry was suggested and this was begun with the teacher reading the lesson from braille, leaving Mrs. G. to re-read it to herself as best she could, to refresh her memory as to those sections of which she felt less sure. Mrs. G's progress resulted in her having several of her poems published in the local newspaper, and on four separate occasions she won a small money award given for the best poem of the week. These prizes were a great satisfaction to her.

Mrs. R. was a woman of sixty who had been blind for ten years without any special instructions from a home teacher. Her hands were too quiet and passive for her own pleasure. She had spent ten years without having realized the possibilities of a more active use of the inquiring hand. After our months of special lessons, her hands were more active and she gradually discovered for herself that she could help form pictures of

* Here is an art object.
** O! Mademoiselle, it is a little deer.

things about her by examining them with her hands. A blind person generally uses his hands more than does his sighted brother but he uses them in a slightly different manner. In order to coordinate his movements without sight, he keeps them closer together. He lets the one guide the other. A newly-blinded person appreciates having this matter called to his attention as it helps him to feel less awkward. When Mr. Y. first tried to write with a pencil after losing his sight, he did not realize why he felt so lost and baffled. He was more confident later when he had learned to keep his two hands close together. Another difference between the sighted and the blind as to the use of the hands lies in the degree of pleasure which may be derived from the tactual sense. This subject, however, needs inquiry of its own and cannot be elaborated here. Simple leather assembly for the middle-aged and elderly persons and texture weaving with patterns perceptible to the fingertips for the younger and early middle-aged persons are valuable sources of pleasure as well as training. In commercial weaving the preference of the sighted person for color design, often regardless of texture, must be recognized. However, the home teacher, as such, is not teaching handwork for commercial purposes.

Much has been written and said as to psychological adjustment to blindness and it cannot be stressed too heavily. But we must bear in mind that we are made up of body and mind, and the psychosomatic approach to adjustment problems is sometimes neglected. The home teacher instructs a student as far as possible how to live effectively without a part of the normal sensory equipment. She tries to develop the residual sensory equipment to the full, leaving the individual to work out for himself small differences in method and technique. He may also get suggestions from other blind persons of his acquaintance and from reading. The home teacher wants to aim at fundamental instruction, in drill and in muscle patterns. There is nothing peculiar about the psychological make-up of most of our students, and for those few who have an abnormal psychological deviation, we are not trained to offer help. Insofar as the problems presented by the newly-blinded adult are teaching problems we ought to be competent, and we ought to strive to improve our professional knowledge and skill as judged by the most liberal, progressive and broadly professional criteria.

INSTITUTE FOR PARENTS

The fourth Institute for Parents of Blind Preschool Children will be held at the Illinois School for the Blind, Jacksonville, June 10 through June 16, 1949. The institute is under the sponsorship of the State of Illinois Department of Public Welfare, the University of Chicago Clinics, the Office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Jacksonville Board of Education. Sponsoring agencies are those which contribute either money or staff to the institute and other cooperating agencies. The institute is under the general direction of the Division for the Blind, Department of Public Welfare, of which Raymond M. Dickinson is superintendent, since this division has charge of the program of home counseling service for blind preschool children and their parents to which the institute is a coordinate service. The purpose of the institute is to give information and guidance to parents in the home training of their child, and stress is given to normal child development and the needs of the blind child.

Parents of children between the ages of two and five years are encouraged to attend with their children; parents of younger children may attend without their children. The three previous institutes have been very successful; giving us a good example of the cooperation and teamwork of a number of agencies, public and private, to meet a real need.

BOOK REVIEWS

WHICH GRADE OF BRAILLE SHOULD BE TAUGHT FIRST? By Madeleine Seymour Loomis. 103 pp. New York, N. Y.: Columbia University Press, 1949.

Which Grade of Braille Should Be Taught First? is a current question among educators of the blind. Like previous issues in the history of touch-reading the present one has been given much lip-service, but little written scientific analysis. The author, a teacher and an expert braillist has carefully assembled all facts, analyzed them thoroughly, and submitted conclusive evidence that "Grade Two should be taught to all beginners." The book is a challenge to all those who are vitally interested in the teaching of braille.

Complete understanding of the problems involved is dependent upon a thorough knowledge of the structure of the braille system. The first chapter is a resumé of this basic structure; a summary of the following facts. The braille system is based on a cell of six dots; three high and two wide. Psychologists have shown that this method of arrangement is preferable to two dots high and three dots wide, for the finger has a greater vertical extent than horizontal. From this cell of six dots, only sixty-three combinations are possible. The finger is required to recognize only forty-four different sensations. A single dot will always feel the same no matter where it is placed; but the six positions of the single dot are counted as six formations. Sensations and formations are illustrated in tabulated form in the book. The number of sensations for the sense of touch to memorize is reduced to a minimum. The braille system is not restricted by the limited number of symbols. Learning Grade Two at the outset does not require that the learner learn more combinations or more symbols.

The finger cannot travel as rapidly as the eye, consequently tactual reading is slower than visual. Early educators quickly realized that the number of symbols to be felt must be reduced if desired results were to be attained. This is the function of braille contractions. A sign which is used to express more than one letter is a contraction. One symbol may denote a group of letters or in many instances an entire word. Literary braille is not phonetic; a contraction does not represent a sound. A contraction may have multiple duties but the reader is never required to guess the intended meaning. Well-drafted rules govern the meaning of dot formations so that no contraction is ambiguous. There is no confusion for the beginner who learns only Grade Two.

The braille system, as used in the English-speaking countries, is divided into four grades; the higher the grade, the more numerous are the contractions. Grade One is braille written in full spelling. All words require the maximum number of signs to express them, and the greatest possible amount of finger work. Grade One-and-a-Half braille was the official system of the United States from 1917-1932, it is not part of Standard English Braille. In addition to the symbols of Grade One it has forty-four contractions. Use of contractions is based upon syllabication. Syllable division, determined by lexicographers, is variable and of no value from the standpoint of reading. The reader is conscious of words, not syllables. Grade Two, adopted in 1932 as the official system for English-speaking peoples, is the original Grade Two of Britain slightly modi-

fied. Grade Two contains all the symbols of Grade One plus one hundred and eighty-five contractions. Seventy-three are abbreviated words which are easily memorized, as *"pd* for *paid, sd* for *said."* The forty-four contractions of Grade One-and-a-Half, having the same meaning but governed by different rules are also used. Of the additional one hundred and forty-one contractions only seven do not contain a guiding letter to assist in the memory work. The guiding letter gives the reader a definite clue to the meaning of the contraction. Grade Two reduces symbols and thus increases reading speed. Grade Three, very highly contracted and used only by expert readers, contains five hundred and fifty contractions. Word sequence (joining words without a space) and outlining (omitting vowels) increase the speed of readers using Grade Three. Grade Two is literary braille and the system most commonly used by blind persons.

The process of learning to read Grade Two braille is far more mental than is generally believed. The memory work is not a heavy burden and can be simplified by skillful teaching. The simplicity of any contracted system should not be gauged by the number of contractions it contains, but rather by the manner in which the contractions are arranged for mental absorption. A system of fifty badly arranged contractions would be far more difficult than one with a hundred or more contractions which are arranged so that they can be memorized through association. There are only sixty-three possible characters in any form of braille; therefore, it becomes quite obvious that a symbol must have multiple duties; the reader must know instantly which meaning a sign is assuming. It is for this reason that the teacher must be an expert and possess complete and accurate command of the rules governing all signs; without this knowledge he is incapable of training either the blind child or adult to interpret instantly the meaning of a given symbol. Rapid reading depends largely on the brain's ability to determine the meaning of a character without hesitation. Mental exercises can greatly increase the speed of braille reading. Touch is merely the means by which the brain is receiving information it must interpret. The most sensitive and developed touch will not produce rapid reading if the brain has not been trained to coordinate and taught to react quickly. Reading speed is further increased by having a single character represent as many letters as possible. In Grade Two, twenty-three letters of the alphabet are used as complete words; but they must be treated and spaced as a word in order to avoid misinterpretation. The words so expressed, with two exceptions, (*x* and *z*, representing *it* and *as* respectively) begin with the letters which represent them.

In Grade Two braille, a dropped *b, c,* and *d,* when placed at the beginning of a word or line represent the syllables *be, con,* and *dis,* respectively. The braille character is written in the lower part of the cell, but its formation will feel the same. The distinction is the reading level. If the reader can recognize the period in Grade One, he can also recognize *dis* in Grade Two. In reading inkprint if the eye can see and recognize the symbol used to express the period it can also recognize it as the decimal point. This policy of using the same symbol to represent diverse things appears in print as well as braille. The brain, not the eye, is making the distinction. In the writing of *9778-9790* and *merry-go-round* the hyphen has different meanings. The former is read as 9778 to 9790, and the latter as one word. The brain makes the distinction with such facility that the reader is unaware of his act. The braille reader makes the distinction as easily as does the reader of inkprint.

Seventy-three of the one hundred and eighty-five contractions of Grade Two are abbreviated words. The following sentence is an example: "He said the unpaid bill would be paid tomorrow morning" becomes: *"He*

sd the unpd bill wd be pd to-m morning."

In addition to the above-mentioned methods of contracting there are two-cell contractions in Grade Two. These word and part-word signs have caused much comment and their difficulties have been overstressed. The principle is as follows: The letter *r,* for example, is used to express the whole word *rather.* The letter could be used to represent other contractions provided there would be some way of notifying the reader that a different set of words is being used. In one group, a single right-hand dot is used before the letter in order to make the necessary distinction. This middle right-hand dot has no other function than that of indicating a certain type of contraction. The letter which follows the dot is always the first letter of the contraction. This type of contraction can also be used as part of a word, for the single dot which indicates a contraction, prevents the character immediately after it from being read as a letter, or in the case of a contraction, from being read as letters. Thus *r* when spaced as a word means *rather, r* with the middle right-hand dot before it is *right.* Sixteen letters of the alphabet are used to express words in this group. The reader who has memorized all of the above-mentioned contractions has mastered one hundred of the Grade Two contractions. At the same time, the finger has not been required to meet any new sensations, for, when the alphabet was mastered, the finger became familiar with every symbol used to express the contractions.

In Grade Two, there is a sign to express the whole word *to;* this contraction is never used for part of a word. The use of the contraction is an indication that the reader is dealing with a whole word. A space is not necessary when the reader has been informed that he is dealing with a whole word. The joining of the words *to* and *by* to the word following is valuable in increasing reading speed. The same symbol is used for *by* and *was. By* is always attached to the following word while *was* stands alone. The reader of Grade Two braille is never forced to rely on context for the meaning of a given symbol if he has been adequately informed as to the various methods employed for making the distinctions.

The remaining contractions and braille formations of Grade Two were omitted in the discussion of the symbols because they occur in Grade One-and-a-Half. This is unfortunate since we are endeavoring to evaluate Grade Two as the best form for reading. An analysis of the methods of contracting proves conclusively that Grade Two is not a form of braille which requires the reader to recognise additional symbols by touch. It is a form of braille which reduces the number of signs for the finger to read and achieves this by a little memory work. In the case of child or adult success and reading speed are largely contingent on the ability and knowledge of the teacher and upon the arrangement of the reading material. Those who believe that contractions distort the English language and are not models of good usuage, should not overlook the fact that through them tactual reading can more nearly resemble the reading of inkprint. The contractions of Grade Two braille enable the reader to grasp many words in common usage as a whole and thereby permit him to carry the continuity of thought. Reading is the process of conveying thoughts or information to the brain, and if the process is tactual, everything should be done to offset the fact that it is a slower process than visual reading. The brain cannot record the thought easily when continuity is lost in the effort to distinguish many unnecessary signs.

In learning braille the mind is storing up a multitude of precise impressions which are registered, labeled and classified. They are there in orderly sequence, ready to emerge into the focus of consciousness as soon as the right stimulus is applied. The man who is learning to read inkprint is not improving his

vision, he is educating it. The process of learning braille is educating touch. Develop touch through increased attention. In teaching braille visual impressions should never be confused with touch concepts. A symbol *feels* like something; it does not *look* like something. Grade Two places the weight of the task upon the blind person's asset, memory. The more the reader remembers, the less he has to feel.

The author believes that adults at any age, with a desire to learn, average intelligence and no physical impairment affecting the use of the hands, can learn to read braille if properly instructed and given Grade Two at the beginning.

The chapter, "Present Methods of Teaching Braille to Children", has a special value for elementary grade teachers who are experimenting with Grade Two. An excellent analysis in tabulated form of the Gates Word List is presented. The figures show that if a child is first taught Grade One, 717 words out of 1811 simple words will be changed in form. If the child is first taught Grade One-and-a-Half, 464 of these most commonly used words will be altered. The child cannot benefit by the quick recognition which comes from constant repetition and practice, because words are not given in their final form. For the purpose of analysis, the Gates list is divided into four parts, each part containing five hundred words. In the first 500 words introduced to the child, 70 remain uncontracted until the child learns Grade Two. These 70 words require the child to read 324 characters; when Grade Two is mastered the number is reduced to 220. An increased number of characters to be felt decreases the child's speed.

The policy of introducing Grade Two in the upper grades is a basis for retardation. Changing the form of a word slows the reading process and destroys continuity of thought at a time when the child should be acquiring information, not concentrating on reading skill. Much of the blind child's retardation is due to the fact that he must read several forms of braille in the process of his education. That fact can be remedied by teaching Grade Two braille to beginners. The child who must think through two or three word forms cannot be expected to read rapidly. A knowledge of character is indispensable, requires 37 characters in Grade One, 24 in Grade One-and-a-Half, and 17 in Grade Two. One hundred words per minute in Grade Two is much slower reading than the same number in Grade One. The author rightly concludes that it is unfair to compare blind and seeing readers until we have subjected the blind child to similar methods of teaching. This means the word method and Grade Two.

In the chapter, "Should Grade Two be Taught to Beginners", the author refutes five objections to the procedure:

No child can learn 185 contractions. Contractions are learned gradually and as they occur in the child's vocabulary. Many contractions are infrequent in fourth grade reading material. To avoid introducing contractions too rapidly, books must be carefully selected and sometimes edited. An evaluation of children's books from a braille standpoint is a most helpful part of the book. In the chapter, "Preferences in Reading Material for Children", Marjorie E. Garnett, instructor of a braille class in the public schools of Washington, D. C., has classified books for children according to their desirability from a braille point of view. The basis for comparison is their use in the instruction of beginners in Grade Two. Books are classified as follows: (1) very good and good, (2) fair, (3) poor. The vocabulary of each book is carefully analyzed. Changes in word form for each grade of braille are shown. The evidence proves conclusively that contractions can be taught gradually if books are carefully selected. The selection and editing of books will of course require the cooperation of the printers. Many teachers who know that Grade Two should be taught to beginners are handi-

capped because most books for the elementary grades are printed in Grades One and One-and-a-Half. The analysis of the Gates list at the end of the volume is another aid for teachers who feel that contractions cannot be mastered by children. Approximately 800 words of the first 1811 words taught to children will remain uncontracted in any form of braille. The teacher who is doubtful about children comprehending contractions can delay introducing them by building reading material around these words. The 185 contractions present no problem to beginners because they are learned gradually.

Syllable division is of educational value. This has already been partially refuted. Lexicographers do not agree concerning the subject. The chief objection is that in reading the reader is not conscious of syllables. Children taught by the word method recognize words by shape and their reading speed should not be reduced by making them conscious of syllable division. Many Grade Two signs prevent serious overlapping. In Grade One-and-a-Half *business* must be written without the *in* contraction because of syllable division; in Grade Two the symbol for *ness* shortens the word and does not present a problem. Syllable division is of doubtful educational value and it should not stand in the way of better tactual reading.

Contractions interfere with spelling. Spelling like every other subject must be taught. It is one of the language arts which can be developed through written expression. The child who knows the meaning of braille symbols is easily able to relate them to spelling.

Writing words without a space is objectionable. This has been previously discussed. The child readily masters words in a sequence and enjoys the resulting speed. There are only two types of word sequence; symbols for *to* and *by* must be attached to the following word; *and, for, with, the,* and *a* are written without a space when they succeed each other.

Schools wish method tried. The method has been and is being tried in various parts of the country. Included in the book is a chapter written by Marjorie Garnett, relating her experiment in the public schools of Washington, D. C. The experiment was made at the Douglas-Simmons School, during the school year of 1945-46. Seven children ranging in age from 6 to 15 years were given instruction. Their visual acuity ranged from 20/200 in both eyes to 20/200 in one eye and perception of hand movements at one foot in the other. None of the children were totally blind. The study proved: 1. Grade Two braille has been taught successfully to beginners in grades one through six; 2. Braille was taught to children with partial vision and proved an asset educationally, psychologically, socially and physically. The teacher reports that "with one exception who appears subnormal, Grade Two was effectively taught and learned by beginners. The children not only learned a vocabulary comparable to that of their sighted classmates but they will never face the tragedy of relearning any word that has become a part of their initial vocabulary. All who have some sight have and will continue to have their entire lives a means of reading and writing, using braille to supplement or to substitute for the sense of sight."

"Which Grade of Braille Should Be Taught First?" is well written and carefully annotated. It is a help and a challenge to all teachers of the blind.

—JENNETTE MARIS

SOCIAL WORK YEAR BOOK, 1949. Margaret B. Hodges, Ed. 714 pp. New York, N. Y.: Russell Sage Foundation. $4.50.

The Russell Sage Foundation has just published the tenth edition of the Social Work Year Book. This is issued biennially as a concise encyclopedia, descriptive of organized activities in social work and related fields. The book is divided into two parts, the first being a series of seventy-nine topical articles, and the second consisting of four directories

of social agencies. The topical articles in Part I give objective descriptions of organized activities of programs rather than descriptions of various agencies. Each article is written by an authority in a specific field. The topic is followed by a comprehensive bibliography for those who wish to pursue the subject further.

Part II of the book presents four directories of social agencies of international or national scope. The first directory lists those agencies which are international. Several United Nations agencies concerned with economic, health, cultural or humanitarian problems are described. In the directory of national governmental agencies, those Federal bureaus, divisions or other agencies are listed, the activities of which seem to be within or most significantly related to social work. The third listing includes national voluntary agencies, and the fourth a short list of Canadian governmental and private agencies to relate to the article on Canadian Social Work. Under each agency heading there is listed the date of its founding, address, membership, purposes and activities, as well as information about periodicals published.

Workers for the blind will find several articles of particular interest to them, such as: The Blind, Guidance and Counseling, Public Assistance, Public Welfare, Social Case Work and Vocational Rehabilitation.

—Clara Langerhans

DIRECTORY CHANGES

Page 21—Arkansas State School for the Colored Blind. The new address is 4700 West 20th Street, Little Rock.

Page 23—California School for the Blind. Dr. R. S. French has retired. Dr. Berthold Lowenfeld is the new superintendent.

Page 25—United Workers for the Blind of Colorado. Henry Taylor is now president.

Page 35—Illinois Industrial Home for the Blind. Joseph R. Herman has been named superintendent instead of Jerry Dolezal.

Page 41—Kansas Foundation for the Blind. Charles W. Foote is executive secretary in place of Dr. Forrest Kuhns.

Page 44—Shreveport Association for the Blind. The address is now 1750 Claiborne Avenue, Shreveport.

Page 54—Detroit League for the Handicapped. The address is 535 West Jefferson Avenue, Detroit, Michigan.

Page 57—Services for the Blind, State Department of Social Security. C. Stanley Potter is now supervisor in place of Norman L. Anderson.

Page 75—Guilford Industries for the Blind. The address is now 920 West Lee Street.

Page 78—Center for the Sightless. Miss Mildred Baugh is executive secretary in place of Mrs. Georgia Patterson Rogers.

Page 79—Columbus Association for the Blind. Miss Mary O'Brien is the new executive director, succeeding A. R. Schwartz.

Page 85—Delaware County Branch, Pennsylvania Association for the Blind. Michael Cariola is the new executive director, succeeding Arthur E. Copeland.

Page 86—Upper Susquehanna Branch, Pennsylvania Association for the Blind. Michael Cariola's successor has not yet been appointed.

Page 86—Philadelphia Branch, Pennsylvania Association for the Blind. The new address is 1221 Race Street, Philadelphia 7.

Page 94—Division of Services to the Blind, State Department of Public Welfare. C. E. Morgan is the new director.

Page 94—Nashville Workshop for the Blind. Ray Swann is now superintendent.

WANTED

Elementary grade teacher in a midwestern residential school for the blind. Salary $250 to $450 per month, depending upon education and experience. Apply to the Foundation.

THE DICKINSON-BELSKIE BIRTH SERIES MODELS

MARION H. GREW

As IN ALL SCHOOLS, we had become increasingly aware that our students were in need of much information about human physiology and growth that they were not likely to get unless we actively set about providing it for them. For many years we have incorporated the study of human reproduction in our biology classes along with other animal reproduction, and we have talked a good deal about menstruation, the birth process, and family relationships in our physiology classes. We have incorporated a good deal of the same material in our classes in orientation when topics of marriage, dating, "petting", child care, and so on, came up.

There is much good material on this subject in print, a little in braille. There are many rather wonderful pictures and charts and lately this very fine motion picture, *Human Growth,* which has been pioneered by the public schools of Oregon. But, talk and explain as one will, be as frank and free from artificial restraints as one wishes, there still has always remained great gaps in the actual understanding we were able to give the totally blind, or the child who could see so little that pictures meant very little to him. The article in *Hygeia* about the Cleveland Health Museum models was just what we had been looking for for a long time.

There was a long period of consultation with those in our supervisory departments, of sounding out parents of children actually in the school at present, of determining how the budget could be made to bear such a large expenditure all at once, of deciding just which models would be indispensable since we could not afford them all. So the actual arrival of thirteen Dickinson-Belskie models, including most of the "Birth Series" and several of the related models, was an exciting event, eagerly anticipated by the teaching and counseling staff. We all crowded around to help unpack and to exclaim over the detailed perfection of each model. They were arranged in order on tables in the big living room for all the "grown-ups" to examine first, although no attempt was made to exclude interested older students who happened to drop in. For the first few days the living room had a constant stream of visitors—principals and teachers from our local public schools, health department people, junior college staff members, P.T.A.-ers, and so on, envying us while we glowed with satisfaction.

We found, as we had expected, that adult education within our own group was our first task, so we gathered together books and pamphlets from the health department, the library, the schools' libraries and various publishers. The material provided for use with the film, *Human Growth,* which the public schools in this community are using in their health education and family life classes proved useful, as did many more technical works. After a few days we moved our models into the student library where everyone could see and handle them. All the older students read and study here at odd hours as well as in assigned ones, and there is much casual traffic in and out, so no one was likely to miss them or to lack an opportunity to examine them

Mrs. Marion H. Grew is superintendent of the Washington State School for the Blind.

by himself or in a group. Much informal discussion went on, of course, and staff members were careful to "just happen by" very frequently to join in the conversations.

No particular schedule has been set up and we have been careful not to make the study of the models a separate unit or to emphasize them. As the various classes, from primary through high school, in health education, social studies, orientation, or various high school subjects arrive at topics concerning reproduction, family living, heredity, home nursing, personal health, and so on, the models are made use of as they are related to the particular discussion, just as our other physiology and biology models, our maps and charts, our books and typewriters are used.

One pleasant result of our possession of these models is that we at last have something to lend the public schools in our area who have so long shared their equipment with us. Groups of public school students who have used the film, *Human Growth,* have come with their teachers to see our models; student friends of our children have been brought here to "see what we have," so that a sharing of knowledge is taking place which we find very stimulating. Even our janitor is proud of "them dollies."

Everyone is of course fascinated by the twins and many heated arguments about identicals and fraternals have at last been settled. We have been interested in two comments about the last model in the birth series which shows the doctor's hands receiving the baby's head. One, from a recently blinded high school boy, was a satisfied ejaculation when he was able to determine for himself that the doctor did have on rubber gloves; the other was from a sighted two-year-old, who exclaimed joyfully, "Daddy," when he had finished his long serious survey of the series and arrived at the welcoming hands. That spontaneous comment seemed to us a fine tribute to the artistry with which those gentle hands were modeled.

APPOINTMENT

After ten years with the American Foundation for the Blind in the capacity of Director of Educational Research, Dr. Berthold Lowenfeld last month relinquished that post to take up his new duties as superintendent of the California School for the Blind. He succeeds Dr. Richard S. French, who retired January 1st.

Born in Linz, Austria, on November 2, 1901, Dr. Lowenfeld received his early education at the Real Gymnasium there, later enrolling at the Teachers Academy in Vienna. In 1924 and 1925, he received his State Teaching License for Public Schools and his State Teaching License for the Instruction of Blind Children. From 1920 to 1927 he attended the University of Vienna, receiving his Ph.D. in the latter year. He majored in child psychology, his thesis being "Systematic Study of the Effects of Sounds and Noises on Infants."

Before coming to America permanently in 1938, Dr. Lowenfeld held the posts of teacher and head teacher in the Institute for the Blind, Vienna, and Director of the Children's Institute, Vienna. As early as 1930 he had visited this country as a Rockefeller Research Fellow for a year's study of child psychology and education of the blind in the United States.

In addition to his work at the Foundation, Dr. Lowenfeld has in recent years been an instructor in summer courses for workers with the adult blind at Western Reserve University; a member of the graduate faculty in summer courses at the Institute of Social Work of the University of Michigan, visiting professor at the University of Washington, Seattle (summer sessions), and lecturer in special education at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Dr. Lowenfeld is a member of numerous professional organizations, such as the International Council for Exceptional Children, of which he is chairman of the committee on international relations; the Greater New York

Council of Agencies for the Blind, of which he was president from 1946 to 1948; the American Psychological Association, the National Education Association, and the American Association of Workers for the Blind, of which he was a member of the board of directors from 1941-1947, a member of the joint advisory committee on research from 1943 to 1947, and secretary of the board of certification for home teachers since 1945. In 1947 he organized the first National Conference on the Blind Preschool Child.

He is the author of numerous articles in professional journals and encyclopedias and of several pamphlets published by the Foundation. Also, he has been popular as a speaker at conferences on work with the blind and some of his papers have been published.

The California State Department of Education is to be congratulated upon its selection of Dr. Lowenfeld to be superintendent of its school for the blind. With the benefit of his ability and progressive thinking, the California School is sure to continue in the forefront in rendering services to blind children.

RETIREMENT OF RICHARD STEIMMIG

The retirement of Richard Steimmig as business manager of The New York Association for the Blind on May 1, 1949, terminates thirty-five years of earnest and constant endeavor in a career marked not only by great internal changes in his particular field, but by two disastrous world upheavals. That he was right in his judgment and determination to instill sound business principles in his methods and organization is proved by his record of achievement and the growth of the departments under his supervision.

To understand the character and individuality of Richard Steimmig, one should be acquainted with his early life and struggles. Leaving the land of his birth, Germany, in his youth, he came to the United States, alone and friendless, depending solely on his own resources. With only an ordinary education and little knowledge of the language or customs of a strange country, he at first labored in the coal mines and at other work requiring long and arduous hours. His many and diversified experiences, however, seemed to provide him with a vista of knowledge and practicality which later stood him in good stead in his chosen vocation. Because in the ranks of those engaged in humanitarian efforts we are more likely to encounter men with professional and specialized backgrounds and training, Richard Steimmig was sometimes apart in his viewpoint, methods and approach. He intensely disliked personal exhibition and was quiet, unassuming and conservative in manner, but firm and steadfast when making decisions. He worked hard and expected the same of his staff. With the passing years, Mr. Steimmig revealed a warm and sympathetic personality.

As business manager since 1914, one of Mr. Steimmig's important duties has been the administration and supervision of the Bourne Workshop. Sound and judicious methods have resulted in the growth of the shop and brought to the blind workers a greater measure of security, better opportunities and more lucrative jobs. Through Mr. Steimmig's foresight, advantage has been taken of new methods in the production, sale and distribution of blind-made products. He was one of the strong proponents of government buying and National Industries for the Blind, and has been active on the General Workshop Committee since its formation. Through his planning, the Bourne Workshop took an active part in war-time production, with such excellent results that the shop was awarded the Army "E". Mr. Steimmig initiated our retail sales organization which has proved to be a most satisfactory outlet for not only Lighthouse products but also those made by other organizations for the blind.

Richard Steimmig's interests and responsi-

bilities brought him in close contact with every part of a large and expanding Lighthouse, whose facilities have multiplied many fold. Thus, during the three and a half decades of his service, he has indelibly impressed himself on our work in countless ways. We find it difficult to visualize a Lighthouse without Dick Steimmig, but feel he has well earned this period of leisure when he may quietly enjoy the fruits of his labor and devote himself to those pursuits which will give him pleasure and contentment.

MARIAN HELD

A FLORIDA RESORT FOR BLIND PEOPLE

For some time there has been talk of the desirability of a resort hotel for financially able blind persons. To meet this need, Dr. Louis J. Colman, formerly director of the prevention of blindness division of the Florida Council for the Blind has opened the Chasco Inn Resort-Club for the Blind. This two-story hotel is located in the heart of New Port Richey on the west coast of Florida, nine miles from Tarpon Springs and thirty-nine miles from Tampa or St. Petersburg.

This town has shops of every variety, paved sidewalks, broad streets and little traffic. Churches of the various denominations are within pleasant walking distance and the post office is very near. The town also has its own beach on the Gulf and, besides bathing, other attractions offered by the hotel are boating, fishing, a refreshment bar, and various types of outdoor and indoor games. A braille library is to be at the disposal of guests, as well as a "hobby shop" for woodworking, rug-making, pottery and leather work, and a music room. Mrs. Colman is operating a kennel for Seeing Eye dogs in combination with her Lady Lou Doberman pinscher kennels.

Those persons connected with the management have had experience in work with blind people. The guest is free to plan his day and evening according to his own wishes whether he choose working in the shop, gardening, reading braille, listening to Talking Books or the radio, fishing, bathing, walking, dancing or sun bathing. Rates include three full meals and either afternoon tea or late party supper, complete laundry service, a radio in each room, use of the library and hobby shop, music facilities and many forms of recreation. For full information write to Dr. Louis J. Colman, Director, Chasco Inn Resort, P. O. Box 727, New Port Richey, Florida.

WESTERN CONFERENCE

The Western Conference of Home Teachers of the Adult Blind will be held June 15-18 at the Cosmopolitan Hotel in Denver. During the first two days, home teachers will meet jointly with rehabilitation workers for the blind from Regions VIII, IX, and X; and on the last day and a half there will be sectional meetings for home teachers and for rehabilitation workers. Preceding the conference there will be a four-day institute for professional workers, commencing on June 10. Sunday is assigned for recreation. All are cordially invited to attend these June meetings in scence Colorado. For further information write to Miss Elizabeth Foley, 3536 N. E. 18th Avenue, Portland 12, Oregon.

OUTLOOK
FOR THE BLIND
and
THE TEACHERS FORUM
15 West Sixteenth Street,
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P. C. POTTS, PH.D.
Editor

EMILY J. KLINKHART
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THE SUGGESTION BOX

By the Technical Research Department

SAFETY CONFERENCE. At the annual meeting of Safety Engineers this year, considerable emphasis was put on the fact that most accidents nowadays occur in homes.

For any blind person who has given any attention to the matter, most of what was said is old stuff. The slogan which most nearly covered it was "Safety is Good Housekeeping." The same factors which keep accidents down among blind people in industry operate in the home.

The most interesting section was concerned with safety for infants. One of the most common sources of poisoning in young children, it was pointed out, is aspirin. Six to eight tablets can be fatal to small youngsters. Parents were urged to put aspirin bottles among the danger-drugs along with cathartics or tonics containing strychnine. It was pointed out that architects should begin realizing that growing children can climb and should stop putting medicine cabinets over sinks next to toilets so that small fellows can reach even the top shelves. Separate, inaccessible cabinets should be provided for dangerous medicines and poisons.

An extensive exhibit was on view, and the most interesting products on display were non-slip floor waxes which had high gloss and yet were not at all slippery, non-slip cements for patching worn steps, no matter what they were made of, and a non-tip kitchen ladder with wide steps and a patented new feature which brings the top step close to the area to be reached. Further details can be supplied about any of these products.

COSMETIC CONTACT LENSES. Inquiries have been received from time to time about means of covering eyeballs which are discolored. Dark or frosted glasses, of course, have long been used, but some people whose duties keep them in the public eye a great deal have wished for a less noticeable method.

Where contact or "invisible" glasses could be worn, it is possible to have these pigmented by the same methods as are used in plastic eyes, so that the disfigured eyeball is completely hidden by the lens. Such "cosmetic lenses" can be made by any optician equipped to supply both contact lenses and plastic eyes. Almost any sizeable city will have such opticians. These lenses require individual fittings, and where one eye looks normal the lens for the other will be colored to match. In New York they cost about $100.00 each. They cannot be worn indefinitely without discomfort.

CAN OPENER. While numerous wall-type models of can openers are widely available, there has been a small demand for a suitable portable model, and several people have suggested the Edlund Junior, No. 5, as the ideal solution. The functioning parts are mounted on a metal assembly measuring about 1½ by 2 by ½ inch thick. The toothed wheel is operated by a 3 inch handle on a shaft extending from the top. A 4¼ inch handle extends from the back.

In operating, the blade is placed over the flange of the can and the housing is pressed down so that the blade pierces the can. The top handle is then turned until the can is completely opened. It opens round, oval or square cans, and stays sharp indefinitely.

Postpaid—70¢

BULLETIN BOARD

The Industrial Home for the Blind—Representatives of the Israeli blind recently visited the Industrial Home for the Blind to inspect training and shop techniques there, with the purpose of adapting them to the work of the Jewish Institute for the Blind of Jerusalem. Mr. Feivel Meltzer, chairman and Mr. Schlomah Dov London, secretary of the Jewish Institute made an inspection tour of the Home's facilities under the guidance of Mr. Philip Trupin, a blind instructor trainee.

Hundreds of Jewish blind are now stranded in Europe and the Jewish Institute for the Blind of Jerusalem is working toward expanding and improving its present facilities so that these blind may find a haven in Palestine.

New York State Commission for the Blind—In cooperation with the newly developed department of special education under the directorship of Dr. Maurice Fouracre at the State College for Teachers in Buffalo, the Prevention of Blindness Service arranged and coordinated a two-semester extension course, called "A Survey of Eye Conditions", during the school year 1947-1948. The purpose of the course was to acquaint teachers, nurses and school nurse teachers with the development and preservation of vision as well as with care of the eye in disease.

Twenty-six students registered for the course. Lectures given by ophthalmologists and other specialists covered various eye conditions as well as sight conservation and adjustment of the visually handicapped. The course was further supplemented by slides, motion pictures and field trips arranged by a prevention of blindness worker who acted as coordinator.

During the first semester, ophthalmologists presented material on the structure and function of the eye, the errors of refraction and motor anomalies. Field trips included a visit to an optical office to observe the grinding of lenses and fitting of spectacles. The students also observed children being treated at the Buffalo Orthoptic Clinic. The first part of the second semester was devoted to a discussion of diseases of the eye. The ophthalmologists pointed out preventive measures as well as treatment of the conditions. The course was rounded out by a discussion of the vocational and educational adjustment of the visually handicapped. Evaluations by the students indicate that the material presented has proved to be of interest and value, particularly to nurses and teachers who are concerned with the eyes of children.

Vacation Camp and Dormitory for the Blind—The camp at Rye, N. Y. is to be open from June 22 until after Labor Day, and blind men and women over eighteen years of age will be accommodated for two-week periods free of charge. An active recreational program is carried on. The dormitory for blind working men at 32 West 74th Street has accommodations for a few more persons, at least for the summer. The rates for room and board are very reasonable.

Iowa School for the Blind—For ten years the school has been holding annual vocational conferences in connection with its counseling program. During the current conference, representatives of the Iowa Commission for the Blind interviewed each senior and some of the juniors. Among the speakers were D. W. Overbeay of the Kansas School for the Blind, Mrs. Ethel T. Holmes and Bob Moore of the Iowa Commission, Dr. and Mrs. Henry Schluntz (who discussed chiropractic and housekeeping), Keith Mossman and Ed O'Connor (who presented the subject of law), Supt. Harry J. Eastman, of the Vinton schools, and Ross Cramlet, principal, and Harry Gibson, instructor, at Des Moines Technical High School. Extensive training facilities in machine operation have been outlined by the Commission and set up at the high school.

Montana Association for the Blind—The fifth annual Montana Summer School for the Adult Blind will be held from June 26 through July 30 at Bozeman. By arrangement with Montana State College the entire facilities of Hamilton Hall have been made available for the exclusive use of the summer school. Board, room, recreation and classroom accommodations will be located in this one building. All expenses, including transportation,

will be provided without charge to those who are selected as students.

Butler County Branch, Pennsylvania Association for the Blind—A sales program, a recreational program, and a radio series have been inaugurated by the Butler Association, and a monthly bulletin is now issued by this agency.

Michigan School for the Blind—During the past year the school has inaugurated an exploratory vocational course. Students in the eighth grade spend a period of six or eight weeks in various shop courses. By the end of the year they are better prepared to choose the shop course in which they wish to specialize during their high school years.

The New York Association for the Blind—The spring performance of The Lighthouse Players was "Post Road". It was directed by Ramsey Burch and presented on April 27, 28 and 29 to appreciative audiences. Among the first-nighters was Lucille Watson who created the leading role of "Emily" in this show. The proceeds from the play, over and above production expenses, is turned over to the blind actresses.

The Lighthouse Women's Choral Ensemble, composed of eighteen members, appeared in a recital on May 18. Guest artist on the program was Lucile Collette, a blind violinist. Miss Collette has made her debut in Town Hall and has played in concerts in New York and Washington. This ensemble is only one of the four choruses of the Music School. Altogether 191 students registered here study twelve various types of musical education.

The Industrial Home for the Blind—Governor Herman Talmadge of Georgia has sent Vaughn E. Terrell, blind lawyer, author, former district attorney and member of the legislature to work in the Industrial Home's shops to learn how the industrial set-up for the blind of Brooklyn is operated. Upon completion of this stint, Mr. Terrell will return to Bainbridge to assume the position of superintendent of the Georgia Factory for the Blind.

Mr. Terrell is 32 and a native of Rome, Georgia. He has practiced law for the past ten years and received his M.A. and LL.B. from the Atlanta Law School. In addition to his legal practice, he has had fiction stories published in various magazines, including the Saturday Evening Post. From 1945 to 1948 he was solicitor for Rome, a position similar to that of district attorney. In September of 1948 he was elected to the state legislature, but resigned upon receiving his appointment as superintendent this March.

The blind of Brooklyn donated $2100 to the blind of Berlin when a check for that amount was handed by H. Walter Gilbert, vice-president of the Home to Dr. Robert B. Irwin, executive director of the American Foundation for Overseas Blind at a luncheon at the Aldine Club on May 24. Mr. Gilbert who is also president of the Cutting Room Appliances Corporation of New York was host at the luncheon. The check was the Home's contribution to a fund that the American Foundation for Overseas Blind is building to supply the blind of Europe with educational and rehabilitation facilities so long denied them because of the war.

Kanpur Blind Institute—On January 2 a meeting was held in the Methodist Church compound, Kanpur, India, to celebrate the first anniversary of the founding of the Kanpur Blind Institute for the care of destitute blind children.

Messages of good will were received from the Governor of West Bengal and other prominent government officials. The president of the Institute praised the founder, Shri Madan Lal Khandelwal (a blind man), for his unceasing efforts in a noble cause, and appealed to the public of Kanpur for help. In an eloquent speech, Shri Virendra Ji cited the example of the National Institute for the Blind in Paris, which was started in 1784 with only one pupil, the enrollment increasing steadily to hundreds within a short time. He said that in the past, the blind in India had been a burden, but now in Free India, by means of proper education and training, they could become self-respecting, useful citizens.